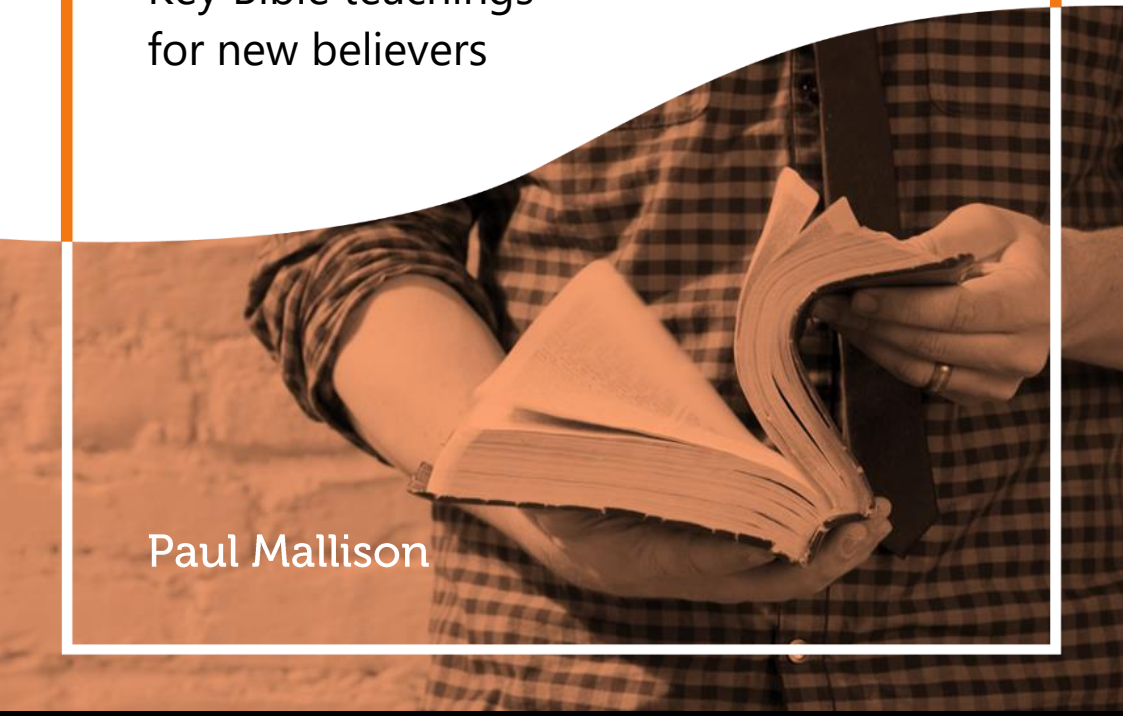
The Bible *Unpacked*

Concise Edition

Key Bible teachings
for new believers



Paul Mallison

With the *NET Bible* plus other translations

The Bible Unpacked™

Concise Edition

Key Bible teachings
for new believers

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A Quick Word

The aim of this booklet is to give a brief overview of the Bible's teachings. The first half (*What to Know*) teaches about God and his relationship with us. The second half (*What to Do*) teaches about how to relate to God and to other people.

The booklet is mainly made up of Bible verses. Before the verses are headings, which reflect what the verses say – in particular the parts of the verses in italics. The verses are sometimes followed by a comment.

To help readers have a grasp of the context of the verses, often a brief introduction is included, in square brackets. These introductions usually state who is speaking and often who they are speaking to. Note that apart from God and Jesus Christ, the main speakers are:

- Moses – who taught the Israelite people God's laws;
- David – who wrote many psalms, most of which are prayers;
- Paul, Peter, John and other leaders of the early church – who spoke to various groups and wrote letters to believers.

This booklet is the third shortest of the seven editions of The Bible Unpacked. For more information and free downloads go to: www.thebibleunpacked.net.

Paul Mallison

Section I.

What to Know

Unit A. God and Spiritual Powers

God's Being

God is spirit

God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth. JOHN 4:24 NCV™

> God's nature is spirit; he is a spiritual being.

God is everywhere

[GOD:] *I am everywhere— both near and far,* [24]*in heaven and on earth. There are no secret places where you can hide from me.* JEREMIAH 23:23-24 CEV

God has limitless power

Nothing is impossible for God! LUKE 1:37 CEV

God knows everything

God is greater than our feelings, and *he knows everything*. 1 JOHN 3:20B CEV

God's Character

God is holy and acts justly

[PEOPLE PRAISING GOD:] *You alone are holy.* All the nations will come and worship you, because *your just actions are seen by all.* REVELATION 15:4B GNT

> God is holy – perfect in all he is and does. As a result, God always acts justly and does not put up with wrongdoing.

God is merciful and loving

[GOD:] I am the LORD God. *I am merciful and very patient with my people. I show great love*, and I can be trusted. EXODUS 34:6B CEV

Jesus Christ

Jesus Christ is the Son of God

... he is *Jesus the Son of God*. HEBREWS 4:14A CEV

Jesus Christ has the nature of God

For *it was by God's own decision that the Son has in himself the full nature of God.* COLOSSIANS 1:19 GNT

Jesus Christ is greater than all things

Christ is exactly like God, who cannot be seen. *He is the first-born Son, superior to all creation.* COLOSSIANS 1:15 CEV

The Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God

And do not grieve *the Holy Spirit of God* ... EPHESIANS 4:30A NET

The Holy Spirit is linked with God's presence

[JOHN, TO BELIEVERS:] *We know that God lives in us because of the Spirit God gave us.* 1 JOHN 3:24B NCV™

Angels and Satan

Angels are very powerful beings who serve God

Praise the LORD, *you angels of his, you powerful warriors who carry out his decrees and obey his orders!* PSALMS 103:20 NET

Satan is evil

Then *the evil one* [Satan] comes and snatches the message from their hearts. MATTHEW 13:19B CEV

Satan has been condemned

God has already judged the ruler of this world. JOHN 16:11B CEV

Unit B. God and the World: Basics

God's Creation

God has made all things

For *you created all things, and by your will they were given existence and life.* REVELATION 4:11 GNT

All things belong to God, because he made everything

The heavens and the earth belong to you. And so does the world with all its people because you created them [12]*and everything else.* PSALMS 89:11-12A CEV

What God has made shows us things about him

God's eternal power and character cannot be seen. But from the beginning of creation, God has shown what these are like by all he has made. ROMANS 1:19 CEV

Every creature's life is dependent on God

Every living creature is in the hands of God. JOB 12:10 CEV

God's Sovereignty

God is the ruler of all things

[DAVID, TO GOD:] You are the source of wealth and honor; *you rule over all.* 1 CHRONICLES 29:12A NET

God has control over people's lives

[DANIEL, TO KING BELSHAZZAR:] But you didn't honor *God, who holds in his power your very life and all your ways.* DANIEL 5:23B ISV

The Problem of Sin

Sin is breaking God's law

Whoever sins is guilty of breaking God's law, because sin is a breaking of the law. 1 JOHN 3:4B GNT

All people have sinned

All of us have sinned and fallen short of God's glory. ROMANS 3:23 CEV

The last phrase speaks of failing to live up to a standard that fits in with God's glory. This is basically due to sin.

Sin leads to the punishment of eternal death

For *the payoff of sin is death*, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. ROMANS 6:23 NET

God's holiness and justice mean that unforgiven sin must be punished with everlasting death. It involves everlasting separation from God, in hell.

God's Judgment

God repays people according to what they have done

[PAUL, SPEAKING OF GOD'S FINAL JUDGMENT:] *On that day everyone will see God's right judgments. 6God will reward or punish every person for what that person has done.* ROMANS 2:5B-6 NCV™

God's judgment is inescapable

[PAUL, TO HIS READERS:] When you judge people for doing these things but then do them yourself, *do you think you will escape God's judgment?* ROMANS 2:3 NET

Unit C. God and the World: Jesus Christ

Jesus Christ's Mission

God sent Jesus Christ to take away sins

You know that *Christ came to take away sins.* 1 JOHN 3:5A CEV

The Jewish leaders compelled the Romans to kill Jesus

Pilate [the Roman governor] wanted to set Jesus free, so he spoke again to the crowds [led by the Jewish authorities]. [21]But *they kept shouting, "Nail him to a cross! Nail him to a cross!"* LUKE 23:20-21 CEV

But God raised Jesus from the dead

But *God raised him from death ...* ACTS 2:24A GNT

Salvation through Jesus Christ

Jesus Christ died for us

But *God showed how much he loved us by having Christ die for us*, even though we were sinful. ROMANS 5:8 CEV

> Jesus died for us. He gave his life in place of our lives to pay the penalty for our sin. He did this so that we would not have to pay it ourselves with eternal death. Instead we can have eternal life. This is spiritual life which extends beyond physical death.

By Jesus' death our sins can be forgiven

For *by the blood of Christ we are set free, that is, our sins are forgiven.* EPHESIANS 1:7B GNT

> The "blood of Christ" is a reference to his death for us.

We can only be saved through Jesus Christ

Salvation is to be found through him alone; in all the world there is no one else whom God has given who can save us. ACTS 4:12 GNT

The New Order

We are not made right by the law – but by faith in Christ

For *no one is put right in God's sight by doing what the Law requires*; what the Law does is to make people know that they have sinned. ... [22]*God puts people right through their faith in Jesus Christ.* ROMANS 3:20, 22A GNT

> We are unable to be made right with God through obeying his law, as we are not capable of obeying it all the time. But now because of what Jesus Christ has accomplished, we can be made right with God by faith in Christ and what he has done.

God has made Jesus Christ Lord of all

Then *God gave Christ the highest place and honored his name above all others. ... [11]And to the glory of God the Father everyone will openly agree, "Jesus Christ is Lord!"* PHILIPPIANS 2:9, 11 CEV

The kingdom of God has come, through Christ's mission

He [Jesus] *said, "The right time has come. The kingdom of God is near.* MARK 1:15A NCV™

> In Jesus' mission a more far-reaching, spiritual dimension of God's reign was established. It exists primarily in the hearts and minds of God's people. At the end of the age God's kingdom and authority will be imposed over all things.

'The Last Things'

Jesus Christ will return and judge all people

For *the Son of Man* [Jesus Christ] *will come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will reward each person according to what he has done.* MATTHEW 16:27 NET

Those who believe in Jesus Christ will have eternal life

The one who believes in the Son has eternal life. The one who rejects the Son will not see life, but God's wrath remains on him. JOHN 3:36 NET

Unit D. God and His Own People

Keys to God's Interaction with His People

God is always with his people

[GOD:] I will be with you as I was with Moses. *I will always be with you; I will never abandon you.* JOSHUA 1:5B GNT

God knows his people

[GOD, TO MOSES:] *I know you by name.* EXODUS 33:17B ISV

God loves his people and is faithful to them

His love for us is strong and his faithfulness is eternal. Praise the LORD! PSALMS 117:2 GNT

God's Holy Spirit lives in and helps his people

[PAUL, SPEAKING TO TIMOTHY ABOUT THE GOSPEL MESSAGE:] You have been trusted with a wonderful treasure. *Guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit, who lives within you.* 2 TIMOTHY 1:14 CEV

God's Transformation of His People

God's people are given spiritual life

[JESUS:] *The Spirit is the one who gives life*; human nature is of no help! *The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.* JOHN 6:63 NET

God's people are being changed to be like Jesus Christ

They show the bright glory of the Lord, as *the Lord's Spirit makes us more and more like our glorious Lord.* 2 CORINTHIANS 3:18B CEV

God fills his people with joy and peace

May God, the source of hope, fill you with all joy and peace by means of your faith in him ... ROMANS 15:13A GNT

God's Care of His People

God cares for his people

Leave all your worries with him, because *he cares for you.* 1 PETER 5:6 GNT

God helps his people in times of trouble

God is our shelter and strength, always ready to help in times of trouble. PSALMS 46:1 GNT

God provides for all their needs

[PAUL, TO BELIEVERS WHO HAD SUPPORTED HIM:] And *my God will fully supply your every need according to his glorious riches in the Messiah Jesus.* PHILIPPIANS 4:19 ISV

God's Plans for His People

God's plans include things for his people to do

God has made us what we are, and in our union with Christ Jesus *he has created us for a life of good deeds, which he has already prepared for us to do.* EPHESIANS 2:10 GNT

In spite of their troubles, God will fulfill his plans for them

[DAVID, TO GOD:] *When I am surrounded by troubles, you keep me safe. You oppose my angry enemies and save me by your power.* [8]*You will do everything you have promised ...* PSALMS 138:7-8A GNT

Section II.

What to Do

Unit E. Relating to God

Being Right with God

Turn from sin to God and believe in Jesus Christ

[PAUL:] To Jews and Gentiles alike I gave solemn warning that *they should turn from their sins to God and believe in our Lord Jesus*. ACTS 20:21 GNT

> We need to believe Jesus Christ to be the means of forgiveness of sins, with what he achieved by his death. As such, we are to trust in him for God's forgiveness of our own sins. In doing so we are considered righteous by God, and granted eternal life.

Believing in Jesus Christ brings eternal life

For this is the way God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that *everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life*. JOHN 3:16 NET

We can be sure of being forgiven

But if we confess our sins to God, *he can always be trusted to forgive us and take our sins away*. 1 JOHN 1:9 CEV

Having Faith in God

Do not fear – trust in God

[DAVID:] *When I am afraid, I will trust you.* 4I praise God for his word. *I trust God, so I am not afraid. What can human beings do to me?* PSALMS 56:3-4 NCV™

Do not worry

Do not worry about anything, but pray and ask God for everything you need, always giving thanks. 7And God's peace, which is so great we cannot understand it, will keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. PHILIPPIANS 4:6-7 NCV™

Loving and Obeying God

Love God with all your heart

Jesus answered: *Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and mind.* [38]*This is the first and most important commandment.* MATTHEW 22:37-38 CEV

Persistently read God's word and obey it

He is to keep this book [of God's teachings] *near him and read from it all his life*, so that he will learn to honor the LORD and to *obey faithfully everything that is commanded in it*. DEUTERONOMY 17:19 GNT

Make Jesus Christ your Lord

Honor Christ and *let him be the Lord of your life*. 1 PETER 3:15A CEV

Connecting with God

Keep on seeking God, with all your heart

Now *seek the LORD your God wholeheartedly and with your entire being!* 1 CHRONICLES 22:19A NET

Pray to God, as a caring father

So *pray this way: Our Father in heaven*, may your name be honored, ... MATTHEW 6:9 NET

Exalting God

Praise God constantly

Our sacrifice is to *keep offering praise to God* in the name of Jesus. HEBREWS 13:15 CEV

Always be thankful

In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, *always give thanks for everything to God the Father.* EPHESIANS 5:20 GNT

Unit F. Church Life

Being One Body

Meet together with other believers

Let us not give up the habit of meeting together, as some are doing. HEBREWS 10:25A GNT

Love each other as Jesus Christ loved us

[JESUS:] *My commandment is this: love one another, just as I love you.* JOHN 15:12 GNT

Help each other

Carry one another's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. GALATIANS 6:2 NET

By helping each other in need, we effectively obey Jesus' teachings.

Worshiping God

Worship God together

Ezra [a priest] *praised the great LORD God, and the people shouted, "Amen! Amen!" Then they bowed with their faces to the ground and worshiped the LORD.* NEHEMIAH 8:6 CEV

Worship God in spirit

[JESUS:] *God is spirit, and the people who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.* JOHN 4:24 CEV

To worship "in spirit" is primarily an inward activity, rather than being centered on the performing of ceremonial acts. It involves our spirit – and thus our mind and will.

Serving God

Do God's work together

[PAUL, TO SYZYGUS:] And, my true partner, I ask you to help them. *These women have worked together with me and with Clement and with the others in spreading the good news.* PHILIPPIANS 4:3A CEV

Be devoted to God's work

Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your work in the Lord is never wasted. 1 CORINTHIANS 15:58B NCV™

Pray to God for help in the work

[THE BELIEVERS, PRAYING:] *Lord, listen to their threats! We are your servants. So make us brave enough to speak your message.* [30]*Show your mighty power, as we heal people and work miracles and wonders in the name of your holy Servant Jesus.* ACTS 4:29-30 CEV

Significant Practices

Baptism, in the name of Jesus Christ

On hearing this, *they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus*. ACTS 19:5 ISV

> By being baptized in or into the "name" of Jesus Christ, a person declares their identification and relationship with Jesus Christ and also their commitment to him.

The Lord's Supper, in memory of his death

[PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] For I received from the Lord the teaching that I passed on to you: that *the Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took a piece of bread,* [24]*gave thanks to God, broke it, and said, "This is my body, which is for you. Do this in memory of me."* [25]*In the same way, after the supper he took the cup and said, "This cup is God's new covenant, sealed with my blood. Whenever you drink it, do so in memory of me."* 1 CORINTHIANS 11:23-25 GNT

Unit G. Relating to People

Love

Love others as you love yourself – which sums up God's law

But *all of these* [commands] *are summed up in the command that says, "Love others as much as you love yourself."* ROMANS 13:9B CEV

Act according to what love involves

Love is kind and patient, never jealous, boastful, proud, or [5]*rude. Love isn't selfish or quick tempered. It doesn't keep a record of wrongs that others do.* [6]*Love rejoices in the truth, but not in evil.* [7]*Love is always supportive, loyal, hopeful, and trusting.* 1 CORINTHIANS 13:4-7 CEV

Show mercy, and God will show you mercy

Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy. MATTHEW 5:7 NET

Forgive others, and God will forgive you

If you forgive others for the wrongs they do to you, your Father in heaven will forgive you. MATTHEW 6:14 CEV

Justice

Do what is right

Do what is right and fair ... PROVERBS 21:3A GNT

Defend the needy

Speak up for people who cannot speak for themselves. Protect the rights of all who are helpless. PROVERBS 31:8 GNT

Provide for the needy

"*If you have two coats, give one to someone who doesn't have any. If you have food, share it with someone else.*" LUKE 3:11B CEV

Common Relationships

Love family members

[PAUL, SPEAKING OF WOMEN IN THE CHURCH:] In this way they [older women] will train the younger women *to love their husbands, to love their children, ...* TITUS 2:4 NET

Respect your parents

Respect your father and your mother ... EXODUS 20:12A GNT

Obey the governing authorities

Obey the rulers who have authority over you. ROMANS 13:1A CEV

Serve your employers wholeheartedly

Honor the Lord and *serve your masters with your whole heart.* COLOSSIANS 3:22B CEV

Spreading the Gospel

Tell others the gospel message about Jesus Christ

Philip began to speak, and starting with this same Scripture, *he told the man the Good News about Jesus.* ACTS 8:35 NCV™

Tell people how they should respond

[PAUL:] *I warned both Jews and Greeks to change their lives and turn to God and believe in our Lord Jesus.* ACTS 20:21 NCV™

Unit H. Persevering

Rejecting Sin

Use God's word to avoid sin

[A PSALMIST, TO GOD:] *I treasure your word above all else; it keeps me from sinning against you.* PSALMS 119:11 CEV

Live by the Holy Spirit

God did this [sent Jesus to deal with sin] so that the righteous demands of the Law might be fully satisfied in us who *live according to the Spirit, and not according to human nature.* ROMANS 8:4 GNT

> Living by the Holy Spirit involves: focusing on what he wants; paying attention to his promptings; and relying on his power.

Ask God for forgiveness of sin

[DAVID, TO GOD:] *Wash away all my guilt and make me clean again.* PSALMS 51:2 NCV™

Major Pitfalls

Do not be proud

Be friendly with everyone. *Don't be proud and feel that you are smarter than others. Make friends with ordinary people.* ROMANS 12:16 CEV

Do not love money

Keep your lives free from the love of money, and be satisfied with what you have. For God has said, "I will never leave you; I will never abandon you." HEBREWS 13:5 GNT

Turn from sexual sin

Then Jesus told her [a woman who had been caught in bed with a man who was not her husband], "I am not going to accuse you either. You may go now, but *don't sin anymore.*" JOHN 8:11B CEV

Hard Times

In hard times, trust in God

[DAVID, TO GOD:] When they plot together against me, they figure out how they can take my life. [14]*But I trust in you, O LORD! I declare, "You are my God!"* [15]*You determine my destiny! Rescue me from the power of my enemies and those who chase me.* PSALMS 31:13B-15 NET

Persist in prayer to God

[A PSALMIST, TO GOD:] LORD, you are the God who saves me. *I cry out to you day and night.* PSALMS 88:1 NCV™

Take comfort in God's word

[A PSALMIST, TO GOD:] *When I suffer, this comforts me: Your promise gives me life. ...* [52]*I remember your laws from long ago, and they comfort me, LORD.* PSALMS 119:50, 52 NCV™

In v. 50 the psalmist speaks of God's promise renewing his life, through the hope that it gives.

Persecution

Do not be afraid

Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Instead, fear the one who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. [29]*Aren't two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them falls to the ground apart from your Father's will.* [30]*Even all the hairs on your head are numbered.* [31]*So do not be afraid; you are more valuable than many sparrows.* MATTHEW 10:28-31 NET

Remain faithful to God and Jesus Christ

[JESUS CHRIST, TO BELIEVERS:] Don't be afraid of anything you are about to suffer. Listen! The Devil will put you to the test by having some of you thrown into prison, and your troubles will last ten days. *Be faithful to me, even if it means death, and I will give you life as your prize of victory.* REVELATION 2:10 GNT

Pray for Persecuted Christians

Over 200 million Christians in at least 60 countries are denied basic human rights solely because of their faith. (Source: World Evangelical Alliance) Every year many Christians are killed because of their faith.

Through prayer, encouragement and practical assistance we can assist and fellowship with persecuted Christians in their suffering. You can play a vital part in this through contacting one of the organizations listed below. Most produce regular news/prayer letters.

Barnabas Fund – www.barnabasfund.org
Barnabas Fund provides material and spiritual support in response to needs identified by local leaders.

Christian Solidarity International – csi-usa.org
CSI works to defend religious liberty and help persecuted Christians.

Christian Solidarity Worldwide – www.csw.org.uk
CSW advocates for freedom of religion and justice for persecuted believers.

Open Doors – www.opendoors.org
Open Doors provides Bibles and other materials, to prepare believers for persecution and equip them to maintain a witness to the Gospel.

Religious Liberty Commission – www.worldevangelicals.org/commissions/rlc
RLC defends and aids persecuted Christians. See www.idop.org regarding the International Day of Prayer.

Religious Liberty Prayer Bulletin – rlprayerbulletin.blogspot.com
This site provides weekly prayer bulletins.

The Bible League – bl.org.au/get-involved/bibles-for-the-persecuted
The Bible League provides Bibles for persecuted Christians. It also trains national believers to plant new churches in countries of persecution.

Voice of the Martyrs – www.persecution.com
VOM provides Bibles, literature, radio broadcasts and other assistance to help persecuted Christians spread the gospel. They also send material aid.

World Watch Monitor – www.worldwatchmonitor.org
World Watch Monitor reports the story of Christians around the world under pressure for their faith.

Then the King will answer, 'I tell you the truth, anything you did for even the least of my people here, you also did for me.' Matthew 25:40 NCV

The Bible has many striking insights. It speaks about God, our relationship with him and our relationships with other people.

This book gives an overview of what the Bible has to say. It is in a form that new believers will find easy to use and to understand.

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